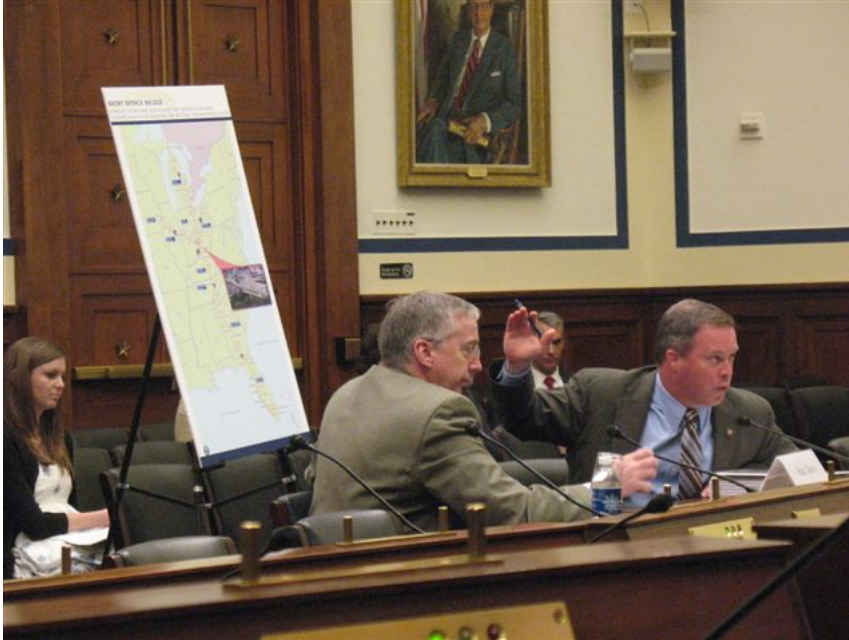


DRIEHAUS AND DAVIS TESTIFY IN SUPPORT OF BRENT SPENCE BRIDGE PROJECT



WASHINGTON, DC—Representatives Steve Driehaus (D-OH) and Geoff Davis (R-KY) today testified before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit about the upcoming Surface Transportation Reauthorization (also known as the Highway bill). □

In their testimony, the lawmakers underscored the pressing need to move forward with the rehabilitation and expansion of the Brent Spence corridor, and urged committee members to make this and other projects of national significance a high priority in the upcoming surface transportation authorization bill.

“The Brent Spence Bridge is not only critical to our local economy and infrastructure, but it is central to a major commercial artery in this region of the country. The current bridge is out-of-date and overburdened, and modernizing the Brent Spence corridor will help accommodate the increased demand.

I’m pleased to be working with Congressman Davis, and I urge the committee to make this project a top priority,” said Representative Driehaus.

Representative Davis stated, “The Brent Spence Bridge is essential infrastructure to the American economy. Every year, an estimated \$417 billion of freight crosses the bridge. By 2030, the amount of freight is expected to increase to \$830 billion.

Congressman Driehaus and I will continue working with our colleagues to ensure that this vital transportation corridor is properly funded in the next surface transportation authorization.”



Today’s testimony was part of an ongoing effort by Representatives Driehaus and Davis to secure maximum federal support for the project. Earlier this month, they met with Senator George V. Voinovich (R-OH) and representatives from the Ohio Department of Transportation, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments to receive a project update.

In March, Representatives Driehaus and Davis met with Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James L. Oberstar (D-MN) to discuss inclusion of the project in the bill and gain the Chairman’s thoughts on how to fund projects of national significance in general.

Transcripts of the lawmakers’ testimony follow.

**Testimony of Rep. Davis
As Prepared for Delivery**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Duncan, for the opportunity to testify today. Congressman Driehaus and I are here to discuss the need for a funding mechanism for mega projects of national significance. The Brent Spence Bridge is the interstate highway bridge that crosses the Ohio River between our two districts.

It is a nationally significant infrastructure corridor that is critical to America's economy.

Congress has repeatedly discussed the need to make serious investments in our national infrastructure. The 2009 Highway Bill presents one of the most significant opportunities to fulfill that need.

Through this legislative process, Congress must find a new way to manage mega projects of national significance. As you know funding for these projects is a matter of great concern to Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member Mica, and I commend them for their vision of developing a rational process whereby projects of national significance will be objectively identified and funded based upon merit.

Despite attempts, Congress has not established a sufficient mechanism for funding mega-projects whose benefits are national, but whose costs are so high they cannot be funded by one or two States. The Brent Spence Bridge project will ultimately cost between \$2 and \$3 billion to complete.

When compared to the more than \$417 billion annually that the bridge carries for our economy, the cost is simply justified

(SOURCE: Federal Highway Administration)

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However, Ohio and Kentucky would both have to dedicate their entire highway transportation infrastructure budgets to the exclusion of everything else for more than one year to complete the Brent Spence Bridge project.

Major transportation bottlenecks cause thousands of hours of delay and have a negative impact on individual travelers, commuters, families, truckers, shippers and receivers particularly when the routes they travel are hostage to underfunded infrastructure nodes of national significance.

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge between Maryland and Virginia, just southeast of downtown Washington, D.C., is travelled daily by some in the room today. In 1993, 200,000 vehicles crossed that bridge every day.

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge carries Interstates 95 and 495 across the Potomac River.

The bridge supports a transportation corridor of national significance connecting the southeastern and northeastern United States.

At the time, the U.S. Department of Transportation estimated that the value of the freight trucked across this bridge was equivalent to 1.3 percent of the entire gross domestic product of the United States.

By the mid-1990s the bridge was carrying 250% of the traffic volume for which it was designed.

The bridge only had three lanes with five highway lanes worth of traffic trying to squeeze through.

The bridge had become a bottleneck with national significance, causing tens of thousands of hours of delay to American travelers and commerce.

Neither Maryland nor Virginia could assume the \$2.5 billion cost of this project which was several times the annual Statewide infrastructure budgets for both States. Additionally, there was no federal program to fund projects of national significance.

If Congress had not authorized special funding for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge - funding that paid for the majority of the cost of the project - the Woodrow Wilson Bridge may have come close to closure with economic impacts felt far beyond the D.C. metro area.

Congress helped resolve the funding issue and the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project was

completed. However, resolution was cobbled together through exception and not cohesive or strategic decision-making and prioritization. The 2009 Highway Bill must include a mechanism for dealing with major infrastructure projects with a national economic impact.

The Brent Spence Bridge connects Kentucky to southwestern Ohio, between my district and Congressman Driehaus' district in Cincinnati. This is a project I have been working on for nearly five years.

However, the bridge also connects Canada to Florida via I-75 as well as Ohio to the western United States via I-71. It also feeds traffic and freight into Chicago via I-74 and all the way to Alabama via I-65. The Brent Spence Bridge affects commerce in over sixty congressional districts in Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee.

The bridge was designed to carry 80,000 vehicles per day. The bridge will soon have to accommodate nearly 200,000 vehicles per day.

Indeed, the Brent Spence Bridge is functionally obsolete.

The bridge carries \$417 billion in freight annually across the Ohio River for the American economy (**SOURCE: Federal Highway Administration**). That is roughly equivalent to 3% of the U.S. gross domestic product in 2008.

By 2030, the amount of freight is expected to increase to \$830 billion, annually.

In other words, the Brent Spence Bridge is essential infrastructure to the American economy.

In the next surface transportation authorization bill, we have an opportunity to ensure that the I-71, I-74, and I-75 corridors continue their role in our national transportation system by building a new bridge at their crucial intersection. The achievement of this goal would support or create 83,000 permanent jobs and save businesses and motorists \$784 million annually (

SOURCE: Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments)

The Brent Spence Bridge is one example of a transportation mega project that is critical infrastructure to the American economy.

I urge all my colleagues to ensure the 2009 highway bill includes a program for dealing with nationally significant projects.

Thank you for your time and consideration today.

Testimony of Rep. Driehaus

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you Representative Duncan, Ranking Member Duncan, and the Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Chairman Oberstar for allowing us to testify before you today. I also want to thank Congresswoman Schmidt, who is a big supporter of this project as well, in eastern Cincinnati.

This project—and I'm not going to go over the numbers that Congressman Davis just went over—but when we talk about projects of regional and national significance, I don't know that we have a better example of that than the Brent Spence Bridge. And I would refer to you the map behind me, which shows, as Congressman Davis suggested, I-75 connecting northern Michigan and Canada all the way to southern Florida. But at the Brent Spence Bridge, at the Ohio River, you have I-75 coming together with I-71 and I-74 all at the same time.

Three major interstate highways crossing one of the largest rivers in the country on one of the busiest bridges that we have in the country.

And as Congressman Davis has already outlined, the cost of replacing this span would exceed

the total appropriation for both Ohio and Kentucky in highway funds on an annual basis.

Now we've already put in the federal government almost \$59 million in the SAFETEA-LU bill into projects associated with the Brent Spence Bridge, and we have made tremendous project due to the leadership of Congressman Davis and others, our senators on both sides of the river, on both sides of the aisle.

And we are now to the point where the folks in Cincinnati, the folks in northern Kentucky are ready to come together on a single proposal to erect a parallel bridge that would separate the traffic of I-75 and I-71 to accommodate the tremendous amount of commerce that is currently going across the Ohio River.

When you look at the Federal Register, Mr. Chairman, and I would refer to you the Federal Register of October 24th of 2008, where the Department of Transportation through its rules defines projects of regional and national significance. It states that a multi-state project meeting the definition of an eligible project under 505.5 of this section shall have eligible project costs that are quantified in the project proposal as equal to or exceeding the lesser of \$500,000,000 or 75 percent of the amount of the federal highway assistance funds apportioned for the most recently completed fiscal year to the state in which the project is located that has the largest apportionment. In this case that would be Kentucky, and as congressman Davis has already indicated, this exceeds not only Kentucky, but also Ohio. The total cost of the project is somewhere between two and a half and three billion dollars.

So when we talk about reasons for this committee coming together, this Congress coming together, to recognize that there are significant spans that need to be funded but fall outside of the typical parameters of this committee, I believe that this project should be the example used in our country as this committee coming together to recognize the dependence of this type of span for the international commerce that takes place throughout the United States.

So I yield back the rest of my time, Mr. Chairman, but with that I also want to thank Mr. Kolb and his staff for the tremendous work that's been done on this already. So with that, I yield back my

time, Mr. Chairman.

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